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## TALES FROM MARYLAND AND PENNSYLVANIA.

BY ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS.

THE first tale was related to me by Georgie Welden of Wayne, Pa. Nos. 2 and 3 were told by Helen Seeny of Maryland, No. 2 having been related to her by her grandmother, a native of Maryland. Nos. 4-7 were told by Mary Smith of Lincoln, Pa.; and Nos. 8-11, by Ruth Holmes, who heard No. 8 from her grandmother from Charlottesville, Va.

I. KEEPING PACE.<sup>1</sup>

Once upon a time there was a fox and a lion. They were going to have a race. The lion said that he could beat all the fox racin'. The fox said that he couldn't beat him racin'. So they got under the mark. They both started out the same time. The lion was runnin' so fast that the fox couldn't keep up with him. So he jumped on the lion back. And when they got to the place, the fox was there too. So that the way it ended out.

2. OUT OF HER SKIN.<sup>2</sup>

There was a man, an' he had a wife, an' everybody said she was a witch. They would complain 'bout the nighttime they would hear a hollerin' an' say it was a witch. So this ol' man he wanted to find out whether his wife really was a witch. So he staid awake one night to watch her. So she got up 'bout twelve o'clock o'night, an' she shook herself, an' her skin all came off. So he was watchin' all the time. An' after she went out, he found the skin all fixed up like a person sittin' in the corner. So he got up an' takin' her skin an' filled it full o' salt. So when the ol' woman came round about four o'clock in the mornin', an' she went to put her skin on, an' she pulled an' pulled, an' so she got it half way on an' couldn't get it any further. So de ol' man he jumped up, an' he frightened her so, she fell down dead with her skin half way on.

(Second Version.<sup>3</sup>)

Once was a man and a woman, and they was both witches. And once they was out one night and didn't have no place to go. And so

<sup>1</sup> Informant Georgie Welden. See this number, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Informant Helen Seeny. See this number, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> Informant Helen Seeny.

they went to some man and woman's house. And they give 'em a place to stay for de night. So round about twelve o'clock the old woman got up an' she rubbed her skin, and her skin all fell off. And the man did the same. So when she got ready to go out, she puts a white cap on her head, an' she said, "I cast away." And he said, "I after you." And so they went out, an' they went to some man's store. And they went in there to take things, and they made a bargain they would divide even up. So after they got 'em, the ol' woman seemed to think the ol' man was takin' more than what belonged to him. So when she got ready to go, she wanted to punish him. And she didn't know no other way, so she snatched this white cap off his head. And she said, "I cast away." An' he said, "I after you." But he forgot he didn't have his cap on his head, so he couldn't get out. So de nex' mornin', when de man came down to the store, he found the ol' man couldn't get out thro' the keyhole. When they found him, he didn't have no skin on him. The man said a man like that didn't have no business to be livin' in the world, so they was going to have him hung. So they had this man all in the wagon to take him to be hung. So they looked up in the sky, an' they seen something flyin'. Looked like a big bird, yet too large to be a bird. So what they thought to be a bird lit down on this wagon what the man was in, and it was the ol' woman. So she put this white cap on this ol' man's head, an' she said, "I cast away," an' he said, "I after you." And they both got away free. That's all.

### 3. TABLECLOTH, DONKEY, AND CLUB.<sup>1</sup>

Once upon a time there lived a woman an' a boy in a house together, Jack an' his mother. An' Jack's father was dead. So Jack's mother planted some barley. An' she told Jack to get the barley. Jack was lazy, an' he didn't want to gather it. So one day she whipped him with a broomstick, an' made him go to gather it. An' Jack made up his mind then that he would go an' gather the barley. So when he went to gather the barley, the wind had blown it away. There was an oak-tree standin' in the field where the barley had been, so Jack picked up a club an' commenced to beat on the tree. So there came along a little old man while Jack was beatin' on the tree. An' he said to Jack, "Jack, my son, what are you doin'?" An' I said, "I'm beatin' the wind for blowing my barley away." So the little man reached in his pocket, an' he took out something that looked to be a handkerchief to Jack. An' instead of being a handkerchief, it was a tablecloth. An' so the old man said, "Spread, tablecloth, spread!" An' so it spread, and there was a lot of all different kinds of food on it. So the ol' man said to Jack, "Take this home, an' it

<sup>1</sup> Informant Helen Seeny.

will pay your mother for the barley." But instead of going home, Jack went to a half-way house to play, an' he staid there all night. An' he said to the people when he went to bed, "Do not tell this tablecloth to spread." But as soon as he was in bed, they told the tablecloth to spread. So in place of Jack's tablecloth they put their own, an' kept Jack's. So the next mornin' Jack got up overjoyed, an' took the tablecloth an' ran home. So he says to his mother, "Mommer, I have something to pay for all your good barley, even though the wind has blown it away." He says, "Just tell this tablecloth to spread." An' they told the tablecloth to spread, an', instead of spreading, it lay still. So his mother whipped him an' sent him out again. And he went down the field an' beat the same oak-tree. And the little old man came along again, an' he said, "Jack, my son, what are you doing to-day?" So he says, "Didn't the tablecloth repay your mother for the barley?" An' Jack said, "No, when I told it to spread, it lay still on the table." So by this time there came a donkey up. So the little old man he said, "Tell this donkey to shake." An' Jack told the donkey to shake. An' he shook a pack of gold out of one foot, and a pack of silver out of the other. But, instead of going home this night, he went back to the half-way house again; but he cautioned them to be sure not to tell the donkey to shake. But it wasn't long before he had gone to bed but they went to the stable and told the donkey to shake. And when they found out that he shook a pack of gold out of one foot, an' a pack of silver out of the other, they put their donkey in place of his. So the next mornin' he got up an' rode the donkey home to his mother; an' he said to her, "Now, this time, mother, I really have got something that will pay you for your barley." He says, "Let's tell this donkey to shake." But the donkey stood still. So the old lady beat him an' sent him away again. So this time, while he was beatin' on the tree, the little old man came along again. So he says, "Jack, my son, what *are* you doin' this mornin'?" Jack says, "I'm still beatin' the wind for blowing my barley away." So this time the little old man gave Jack a club. An' he told Jack whatever he wanted the club to beat, to tell it, "Beat, Club, beat!" So Jack went to the half-way house again with the club. So he said to de people before he went to bed, "Be sure and don't tell this club to beat." So Jack went upstairs, but he didn't go to bed this time; an' wasn't long till he heard the old man say, "Beat, Club, beat!" an' the club commenced to beat on the man. And the old man stood it as long as he could, an' the woman told it to beat her. So they couldn't stand it no longer, so they called for Jack. When Jack came down, he asked them what was the matter. And the man said he had told the club to beat, an' it beat on him. So Jack says, "Give me my donkey an' tablecloth,

and I'll stop the club from beatin'." So, to keep from gettin' beat any more, they give Jack his donkey and tablecloth. So Jack took the donkey an' the tablecloth an' the club, all three, home to his mother. So Jack says, "Mother, I am quite sure this time I have more than enough to pay you for all the barley you have planted." So he says, "Tell this tablecloth to spread." So he says, "Tell this donkey to shake." An' then he says, "Tell this club to beat." An' it beat *her*. And he says, "That's the way it felt when you beat me." So, after it beat her a while, he told it to stop. An' after the club had stopped beatin', they lived happy together always after, by the use of the tablecloth, club, an' donkey.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. JACK AND THE BEAN-POLE.<sup>2</sup>

Jack an' his mother lived together, an' they had planted some beans. And it seemed that one bean had strayed off from the rest, an' it grew up right alongside of the house. Their house was right below a hill, and Jack had always wondered what was on top of the hill. So one day Jack climbed a bean-pole to get up to the top of the hill. So, when he had got to the top, he saw a palace, an' he went to this place to see who lived there. So, when he had got there, he found it was a giant's castle, but the giant wasn't at home. But his wife was. Jack was tired and hungry. So he asked the lady to take him in and give him something to eat. So she did so. But she told him not to let her husband catch him there. So, while Jack was eating, the giant came to the door. She told Jack to hide, an' Jack hid in the chest behind the door. So the giant came in. He said, —

"Fe, fi, fo, fum,  
I smell the blood of an Englishmune."

He said, —

"Be he alive or be he dead,  
Fe, fi, fo, fum!"

But his wife told him that he didn't, that it was only some mutton that she was cooking. So the giant sat down to eat his supper; and after he had finished eating, he called to his wife, and told her to bring him the wonder-box, which he was supposed to have taken from Jack's father before Jack's father died. So, while the giant was sitting there looking in the box, he fell asleep. An' Jack slipped out of the chest behind the door, an' took the wonder-box home to his mother. So it wasn't very long till Jack made up his mind to make another trip back to the castle of the giant. So, when Jack went back this time, he tried to put on like another poor little boy

<sup>1</sup> Compare Parsons, LXXXVIII; Smith, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Informant Mary Smith.

that was half starved. So he begged entrance at the door of the castle from the wife. And she didn't want to have him in, and she told him about the boy that had took the wonder-box from her husband. So he begged so hard that she left him in, an' she gave him some bread and milk to eat. And again, while Jack was eating, the giant came. And as he came in the door, he said, —

"Fe, fi, fo, fum,  
I smell the blood of an Englishmune."

He said, —

"Be he alive or be he dead,  
Fe, fi, fo, fum!"

And Jack jumped in the salt-cellар. His wife said, "No, there hasn't been any one here to-day." She says, "I'm only roastin' some pork for your supper." So, after he ate his supper, the giant sent for his golden hen that lay the golden egg. So his wife went and brought it for him. And while the giant was playing with the egg that the hen had laid, he fell fast asleep. An' Jack carried off the hen and the egg down the bean-stalk to where his mother lived. But Jack still thought that he wanted to visit the castle again. So this time, when he went up the bean-stalk to the giant's castle, he was in the appearance of a newsboy selling papers. So, while the wife went to get the money to buy a paper, the giant appeared, and Jack hid in the closet. And the giant repeated again, —

"Fe, fi, fo, fum,  
I smell the blood of an Englishmune."

He said, —

"Be he alive or be he dead,  
Fe, fi, fo, fum!"

So the wife said, "No, there hasn't been any one here to-day." And after the giant had ate his supper, he called for his harp, the only thing that he had left, an' this was a magic harp. So it commenced to play, an' it played so sweetly that the giant fell fast asleep and commenced to snore. And as the harp stopped playing, Jack came out of the closet, took the harp, and started to the door. But the harp began to play, and it woke the giant up. An' the giant followed Jack out of the door, an' Jack run as fast as he could down the bean-stalk, an' the giant started to follow. But as the giant reached the top, Jack cut down the bean-stalk with an axe; an' as the giant stepped on, he fell down an' broke his neck. An' Jack and his mother always lived happy afterward with the property of the father which the giant had stolen an' Jack had restored again.

5. IN THE WELL.<sup>1</sup>

There was a deep well, an' there was a little bit of water in the bottom of it. An' so one day a fox chanced to goin' by, an' he fell in. So a billy-goat came by. And the fox called to him, an' he asks him to help him out. An' the billy-goat said he couldn't. But the fox said, "There is fine fresh water down here, brother Goat." So the goat was thirsty. So he went to get a drink; and when he went to get a drink, he fell in; an' the fox said, "Help me out, then I'll help you." So the goat agreed to do so. So the fox said, "Let me jump upon your back an' climb out, then I'll reach down an' help you up." So the goat was silly enough to do so. But when the fox had got out, he said, "I'm sorry, brother Goat, but my paws are too short to reach you." So he ran away an' left the poor goat in the water, after he had helped him out.

6. THE RACE.<sup>2</sup>

Once upon a time there was a tortoise and a rabbit lived in a forest together. So the rabbit says to the tortoise, "How slow you walk!" So there was a river not far away, where water-lilies grew. So the tortoise said to the rabbit, "I'll run a race with you." So the rabbit laughed at the tortoise. So the rabbit asked where he wanted to run a race to. The tortoise said, "Down to the river, where the water-lilies grew." And the rabbit said, "You'll grow old and die before you get there." But the turtle said to the rabbit, "Who shall we have for a judge to this race?" An' the rabbit said, "We'll get Mr. Wolf for a judge." So they said, one, two, three, an' away they went. So the rabbit ran right fast till he got in sight of the river where the water-lilies grew. And he lay down in the shade to rest. While he was resting, he fell fast asleep. And when he awoke again, it was the next day at dinner-time. So he was very hungry; and he ran into a near field an' eat some clover, an' he didn't know that the tortoise had passed him while he was asleep. So after he had ate his dinner, he ran right fast to the goal. But who should he find when he got there, waiting for him, but the tortoise who he had laughed at the day before.

7. THE FROZEN TAIL.<sup>3</sup>

Once there was a fox an' a rabbit. They was in partnership. The rabbit used to go fishing a lot. The rabbit told the fox he could show him where there was a nice lot of fish. The rabbit said, "Don't pull up until you feel your tail getting stiff an' heavy." After a

<sup>1</sup> Informant Mary Smith.

<sup>2</sup> Informant Mary Smith. Compare Parsons, L (1). See this number, pp. 174, 226.

<sup>3</sup> Informant Mary Smith. Compare JAFL 12 : 112.

while the fox said, "My tail getting heavy, can I pull up?" Rabbit said, "No, don't pull up yet. Wait till you get a few more on. Pull up now! You got a nice bunch on." His tail stuck, was froze. "That's just what I wanted, Mr. Fox, you treated me so dirty."

#### 8. DIVIDING THE SOULS.<sup>1</sup>

Once there were two men, an' they were out one afternoon fishin'. They caught a large basket of fish. It was growin' towards evening. One of the men says, "Where shall we go to count the fish?" The other man says, "Oh, we'll find a place." So they went on till they come to a graveyard. So they stopped. They went in an' started a-countin', "One for me, an' one for you." They had dropped two fish on the road. They kept on saying, "One for me an' one for you, two for me an' two for you." One of the preacher's friends come along. He stopped an' listened, an' they were in their fifties. He thought the Devil and the Lord was in the graveyard dividin' up people. So he goes to the preacher's house. And he said, "Reverend John, your preachin's true, but the Devil an' the Lord's in the graveyard dividin' up people." Says, "How do you know? I don't believe you." Says, "Well, get your hat and come an' see." When they had got to the graveyard, they heard the two fishermen say, "Let us go after the other two!" So they both ran home as fast as they could go.

#### 9. PLAYING GODFATHER.<sup>2</sup>

Once there was a family of bears. They lived in a little hut in the woods. One day father Bear went to town and bought a large tub of butter. On his way home he met b'o' Wolf. The wolf says to brother Bear, "What have you got there?" He says, "Some butter for my family." The wolf says to brother Bear, "How long do you think that butter's going to last you?" He said, "It will last over winter." So they all went out to work in the field. B'o' Wolf say, "Listen! I hear my wife callin' me." So he left the field an' snuk around back of brother Bear's house. He went in an' ate the top off brother Bear's butter. Then he went back to the field an' said to brother Bear, "I had a little niece born to-day;" and brother Bear said, "What did you name it?" He said, "I named it Top-Off." So the next day they was out in the field again, and he said to brother Bear, "Listen! don't you hear my wife callin' me again?" B'o' Bear said, "No, I don't hear no one callin' you." He said, "Well, I do. I mus' go." So he goes back to b'o' Bear's house, an' eats half of the butter. So he comes back again, an' says, "I had another niece born."

<sup>1</sup> Informant Ruth Holmes. See this number, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Informant Ruth Holmes. See this number, p. 192.

An' b'o' Bear says, "What did you name her this time?" He said, "Oh, I named her Half-Gone." He said, "Half-Gone, that's a peculiar name!" So the third day he went back an' finished it. So b'o' Wolf said to b'o' Bear, "This was the last one she's goin' to have. Because it was the last one, I named it All-Gone." So the corn and potatoes was ripe in b'o' Bear's field, an' he was goin' to have a big supper. So they had a big time, Mis' Bear an' b'o' Bear fixin' for the supper. So they went to look for the butter, an' it was gone. So b'o' Bear he didn't know what to make of that. So he said to b'o' Fox, "Somebody takin' my butter, an' I'm goin' to give a party, an' after the party I'm goin' to have everybody sit in a row in the sun, an' the one that had taken the butter it will show on their mouth. An' brer Fox said, "I don't blame yer, brother Bear." So brer Bear gave a big party, an' he invited all his friends. He told them how he missed his butter. They all agreed with his plans. So, after the party was over, they all sat in a circle in the sun, an' the grease was all runnin' down brer Fox's mouth, an' all their eyes were turned to brother Fox. So brer Bear said to brer Fox, "I'll let you off this time, but next time I'll hang yer." So the party ended, an' they all went on their way.

#### 10. VOICE ABOVE.<sup>1</sup>

Brer Fox was goin' round makin' a lot of trouble. So he drove brother Bear's wife from home by goin' round makin' mischief on her. Said he seen her go down to the pond and flirt with brother Turtle. So after she had gone, it was too late for brother Bear, an' he was sorry. So they made up their minds to hang him. So brother Bear an' a lot of his friends got a rope an' hid behind some thickets. When brother Fox went by, they caught him an' take him to the church. So brer Fox said, "Please let me go say good-by to my wife an' children first." Brer Bear was the judge. He gave brer Fox five minutes. He went down to a large pond, an' he met his friend the stork. He sat down an' began to cry. The stork said, "What's the matter, friend of mine? Can I help you out any way?" Brother Fox said, "Oh, yes! they're goin' to hang me." He said, "You go on ahead of me, an' when they start to hang me, you git up in the ceilin', an' jus' say these words, 'Don't kill him, don't kill him!'" So the stork said "All right!" So he went to the church, and the bear was very glad to have him. The stork got in a corner by himself. They put brer Fox in the electric chair, an' was jus' gettin' ready to push the button, an' the stork flew up in the ceilin' an' begin to sing, "Don't kill him, don't kill him!" An' they all stopped an' listened; and brother Fox said, "Listen! do you hear that?" An' brother Bear say, "Yes, what is it?" He said, "the Lord sendin' his angels down to tell yer not

<sup>1</sup> Informant Ruth Holmes.

to kill me." So they all got scared an' left the church, an' left brother Fox in the 'lectric chair. An' when they had gone, brer Fox got way up in top of a big tree, an' he laughed an' laughed till he cried. He said, "O brer Bear! I got the best of you, after all." That's all.

II. THE DISMEMBERED GHOST.<sup>1</sup>

Once there was a man, an' he wanted a place to lodge jus' fur the night, him an' his friends. So the man saw a little light 'tween the trees, an' he followed the light. It led him to a little house way back in the woods. It was an old man standin' in the door. The man says, "Say, Mister, have you got a place where I can lodge all night?" He says, "There's a little house back there, but it's haunted. If you can stay in it, all right." He says, "I can stay any place the Devil can stay." So he says, "Come on, fellers, we've got a good place!" So the man says, "We can have a nice game of cards here too." They all got around the table, an' had jus' finished a game of cards, when one man looked up, an' a pair of legs came down. He said, "Come on, let's go!" The other men said, "Let's stay here an' see what the end of it is." So they played a second game, an' a body came down. An' they kep' on playin', an' two arms came down. The other man says, "How much longer you goin' to stay here?" He said, "Don't be so scared! nothin' ain't goin' to bother you." He says, "I'm right here; if anything bothers you, it will bother me too." Then the head come down. The man that was standin' in the middle of the floor said, "Well, what are yer doin' playin' cards in my house?" So they all got up from the table, lef' everything they had, an' ran to the man's house. The man says, "What's the matter, fellers?" The men say, "We can't stay in that place." The man says, "Well, you said you could live anywhere the Devil was." They say, "I know, but I can't live there." That's all.

<sup>1</sup> Informant Ruth Holmes. See this number, p. 195.